

Cabinet – 11 December 2013

Domestic Abuse Services Redesign and Tender

Portfolio: Councillor McCracken – Social Care and Inclusion
Councillor Andrew – Children's Services
Councillor Ali – Public Health and Protection

Related portfolio:

Service: Social Care and Inclusion
Children's Services
Public Health and protection

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines proposals for a redesign of services funded by Walsall Council that respond to circumstances associated with domestic abuse. The report outlines the joint commissioning intension of Adult Social Care and Inclusion (SC&I), Children's Services and Neighbourhoods Directorates with regards Domestic Abuse Services for the next 3 years.
- 1.2 The aim of the redesign is to replace the current range of services that are funded and commissioned separately by Social Care and Inclusion (SC&I), Children's Services, Public Health, and Community Safety, with an integrated pathway of services which places a greater emphasis on prevention.
- 1.3 The intention is to re-commission all of the services into a more cohesive and integrated pathway by April 2016 through one procurement exercise that will be conducted during 2015/16.
- 1.4 In the meantime, SC&I and Children's Services will re-commission their current services by April 2014 with contract duration of 2 years, and an option for the Council to extend by 1 year. The Director of Childrens Services will award a contract for Management, administration and facilitation of the multi agency Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) and Support Services in February following a tender.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Cabinet notes the continuing joint work between the three Directorates and other key partner agencies through the Domestic Abuse Strategic Group to jointly commission an updated Domestic Abuse Strategy (2011-14) and review the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) (currently out for tender) processes. The updated strategy and outcome of the review will be reported to Cabinet following its completion in March 2014.
- 2.2. Cabinet delegates authority to award contracts for domestic abuse floating support and outreach services to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Inclusion and to subsequently sign or authorise the sealing of any deeds, contracts and other related documents in relation to such services.

3. Report detail

3.1 Policy context

- 3.1.1 The focus of the Government's Domestic Abuse Action plan 2013 "A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls" is on preventing and stopping violence at its source. The strategy places greater emphasis on managing perpetrators of domestic violence; intervening earlier to protect victims; and identifying wider opportunities to challenge and change the attitudes and behaviours that underpin violence against women and girls. Also the Domestic Abuse definition has been extended to include those aged 16-17 and includes coercive control.
- 3.1.2 In addition the government recommends the appointment of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates to support victims through legal proceedings, and the implementation of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. IDVAs form part of the present and proposed tendered services. Domestic abuse is a central issue in child protection and has been a factor in the family backgrounds of two-thirds of the serious case reviews where a child has died. The report also found that 69% of high-risk adult victims of domestic abuse have children (Munro 2012).
- 3.1.3 In Walsall 593 young people aged 14-24yrs were referred to DART as victims of abuse in 2012/13. This age group represents almost 30% of all referrals in this year. In the same year there were 925 referrals to children's services where domestic abuse was a factor and this will increase to an estimated 1100 full year effect in 2013/14. Consequently the effective commissioning of services to reduce domestic abuse is of key importance to Children's Services and the DART service has a considerable impact on the referrals to Children's Services.
- 3.1.4 It is envisaged that national social media campaigns similar to the 2012 Teenage Relationship Abuse and Teenage Rape Prevention campaign will also be commissioned to take place during 2013-15.
- 3.1.5 The Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategy 2011-14 'A time for change' produced by the Safer Walsall Partnership and key stakeholders recommends a move to an integrated service pathway for domestic abuse prevention, intervention, victims support, and offender management. The strategy proposes multi-agency working between statutory agencies and the voluntary/community sectors in delivering this pathway model. The 2011-14 Strategy will be reviewed early in 2014 setting

out priority areas for the development of domestic abuse services and partner agency collaboration over the next three years.

3.2 Current Domestic Abuse Services

3.2.1 Current models of practice are reactive in nature by providing services once a domestic abuse incident has taken place. The total current Council investment in domestic abuse services amounts to a total of £541,472. This is made up as follows:

- SC&I funds the provision of a 24 bedded women's refuge and 20 places of floating support (for women only) at a cost of £323,643 per annum. These services will be re-tendered from April 2014 with a specification which is in line with the development of a strategy for an integrated service pathway for domestic abuse services which will come to Cabinet in March 2014.
- Public Health funds the provision of an outreach worker to support victims of domestic abuse with additional complex needs i.e. mental health, substance misuse or frailty issues at a cost of £30,000 per annum.
- Children's Services fund the following services at a cost of £120,000 per annum:
 - a. Management, administration and facilitation of the multi agency Domestic Abuse Response team (DART);
 - b. Support to victims and risk assessment -(DART; and the Independent Domestic Abuse Adviser (IDVA)
 - c. Young Persons IDVA
 - d. Specialist Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA)(2x family support assistants)
 - e. Perpetrator Programme

These services are currently being re-tendered with a specification which is in line with the development of the Strategy for an integrated service pathway for domestic abuse services.

- Community Safety Partnership fund the provision of the Modus licence, and an IDVA at a cost of £50,000 per annum, and this grant funding from the Police Crime Commissioner is held within the Neighbourhoods Directorate;
- Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust and Walsall Council have committed to contribute £15,000 per annum to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) until April 2015. The Walsall Council contribution is funded from the Council's reserves.

3.2.1 Services funded by other agencies in Walsall include:

- 2 IDVA's funded by Walsall Housing Group as part of their core service offer for Walsall Housing Group tenants;
- Aaina: A Community based organisation that provides a specialist needs led support service for black and minority ethnic victims of domestic

abuse. Aaina also provide domestic abuse awareness raising workshops, and specialised training for frontline staff in Walsall and regionally; and

- Crisis Point: An Independent Sexual Assaults Advocate (ISVA) funded through the police commissioner.

3.3 Service Redesign – Domestic Abuse Prevention Pathway (see Appendix A)

- 3.3.1 The new integrated service pathway is based on the outcomes of consultation held with former and current service users and stakeholders and aims to break the cycle of domestic abuse within families; reduce incidents of abuse; and reduce repeat victimisation through the use of early intervention and prevention services.
- 3.3.2 All directorates of the council and partner agencies have an interest in these services, and the strategic aim is to clarify their role as part of a broader range of services, and not treat them in isolation from prevention or follow up support.
- 3.3.3 The intention is to re-commission all of the services into a more cohesive and integrated pathway by April 2016 through one procurement exercise that will be conducted during 2015/16. However, current contracts held by SC&I Directorate and Children's Services end at April 2014 and so it is necessary to re-commission these in the meantime.
- 3.3.4 Some of the current non residential services are provided 24 hours a day 7 days a week. They will be remodelled to be available Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm in order to free up funding to reinvest in therapeutic play sessions for children who have witnessed violence; to fund an additional part-time IDVA post; and to support victims taking court action against perpetrators. These changes will mean that these services are more in line with the new integrated service pathway.
- 3.3.5 The refuge accommodation will provide the emergency accommodation as a high risk service. The sessional play worker delivered within the refuge will provide the emotional resilience for victims and their children to break the cycle of abuse as a continued risk service. The floating support will provide early intervention and support for victims or those at risk of domestic abuse as a prevention and immediate risk service. The dedicated Court IDVA will support victims seeking redress through the court as an immediate and continued risk service.
- 3.3.6 Public Health intend to re configure their current commissioned outreach worker role to align closely to the other commissioned services and include liaison with the Hospital A&E Department to identify victims of domestic abuse and through an offer of early help avoid escalation of the problem and repeat victimisation.

3.4 Timescale

- 3.4.1 The Adult SC&I Directorate will re-tender for existing domestic abuse services for the start of the next financial year 2014/15. This is a tight timetable, and it will be prudent to plan for slippage that may make it necessary to extend the current contract for a period after March 2014.

- 3.4.2 The existing Domestic Abuse Strategic Group, comprising membership from Public Health, Community Safety, Housing, Children's Services, Adult SC&I, Probation, Police and Court Services, will adjust its terms of reference to include membership from Council corporate departments of Finance, Legal and Procurement and will be renamed the Domestic Abuse Strategic Commissioning Group. The Group will appoint a lead commissioner and a named finance officer to hold the single combined budget.
- 3.4.3 The Group will oversee the review of the revised Domestic Abuse Strategy and Domestic Abuse response Team review and report back to Cabinet following its completion in March 2014.

4. Council priorities

Delivering an integrated pathway of domestic abuse services which incorporates early intervention and prevention will help to prevent/reduce the number of domestic abuse victims to include the use of the full range of criminal justice sanctions to maximise the preventative opportunities; improve health and wellbeing and help to create safer and inclusive communities

5. Risk management

Historically domestic abuse services have not been subject to competition which places the council at risk of legal challenge. Furthermore, there is a risk of legal challenge if the procurement process is not conducted correctly. Legal, Finance and Procurement officers will be represented on the Domestic Abuse Strategic Commissioning Group.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The services are currently funded from within the council's cash limited revenue resources.
- 6.2 The total contract value of the current Adult SC&I Directorate and Children's Services contracts is £444,000 per annum. However, this may not be the future amount depending upon the outcome of the current and planned re-tendering processes. Funding of activities will be reviewed once the outcome of the tenders is known, but will remain within the approved cash limit.
- 6.3 The process will be used to maximise opportunities to ensure service provision remains suitable for need but the new tender will seek to provide best value.
- 6.4 Under the governance of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Commissioning Group the 3 Council Directorates intend to create a single budget with a lead commissioner appointed from the membership of the Strategic Commissioning Group and a named Council finance lead.

7. Legal implications

The council needs to ensure the delivery of support services is in compliance with equality legislation; that the procurement process is in compliance with the council's Contract Rules 2010 and any relevant procurement legislation, to mitigate the risk of challenge.

8. Property implications

No Walsall Council property assets are implicated by the proposals in the report.

9. Health and wellbeing implications

The proposed integrated pathway which incorporates early intervention and prevention will help to prevent/reduce the number of domestic abuse victims; improve health and wellbeing and help to create safer and inclusive communities' living which is in line with the Marmot objectives.

10. Staffing implications

The service redesign and tender may result in 13 full time staff posts employed by existing providers being TUPE'd across to successful providers. Staff affected may face redundancy but the tender should create a similar number of new employment opportunities.

11. Equality implications

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the project management approach to the procurement exercise.

12. Consultation

- 12.1 A comprehensive communication and consultation plan has ensured that all stakeholders have had the opportunity to share their views as part of the process of developing an integrated pathway for domestic abuse services.

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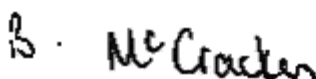
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Main Features of an Integrated Domestic Abuse Services Pathway

Prevention Services

- Direct participation activities in the community that create awareness of domestic abuse and related issues.
- Domestic abuse to be addressed in Nursery, Primary and Secondary school curriculums.
- Media campaigns promoting awareness of domestic abuse and providing information about local resources and how to respond to domestic abuse situations/settings.
- Interventions that develop conflict resolution skills.
- Healthy relationships with an emphasis on teenage relationships and dating violence.
- Responsive parenting programmes delivered in a wide range of settings.
- Domestic abuse training to be provided to staff working with children, families and young people.
- Access to universal service provision /organisations for at risk groups.
- Support services for family members identified as being at risk of perpetrating or becoming victims of domestic abuse.
- Use of Peer Educators to provide advice and guidance to at risk groups.

Services for People at Immediate Risk of Domestic Abuse

- Targeted early help and counselling for victims and children.
- Crisis support and advocacy via specialist domestic abuse and related services.
- Community based interventions.
- Access and guidance through the legal and welfare systems.
- Perpetrator programmes.
- 'Keeping Safe' programmes delivered via, health, education and social care initiatives.
- Practical support through the police.

Services for People in Continuing Risk of Domestic Abuse

- Specialist service provision including: Community based home visits, crisis support, individual counselling and group work.
- Community safety via police.
- Emotional resilience services for victims and their children to enable them to break from the cycle of abuse.
- Involvement of Adult/Children's social care to address safeguarding concerns

Services for People at High Risk of Domestic Abuse

- Emergency accommodation
- Intensive police, court, juvenile justice and community collaborations to address situations of chronic and dangerous domestic abuse.
- Social housing and welfare support.
- Therapeutic support to address the underlying trauma for victims and for those children who display emotional and behavioural problems